


Chapter 2


Establishing a Global Framework for Sustainability in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Sustainability in higher education has emerged as a critical and transformative imperative in the 21st century, reflecting the urgency of global environmental,

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social, and economic challenges. With increasing concerns about climate change, biodiversity loss, social inequality, and resource depletion, universities and colleges around the world are being called upon to play a pivotal role in fostering sustainable development. This role extends beyond education and research to encompass institutional operations, community engagement, and global collaboration. Through partnerships with local governments, businesses, NGOs, and indigenous communities, universities contribute to sustainable development at regional and global levels. Service learning, community-based research, and sustainability-focused extension programs empower students and faculty to apply their knowledge in real-world settings, addressing pressing societal needs while building collaborative relationships.

OVERVIEW OF SUSTAINABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Sustainability in higher education has emerged as a critical and transformative imperative in the 21st century, reflecting the urgency of global environmental, social, and economic challenges. With increasing concerns about climate change, biodiversity loss, social inequality, and resource depletion, universities and colleges around the world are being called upon to play a pivotal role in fostering sustainable development. This role extends beyond education and research to encompass institutional operations, community engagement, and global collaboration. Through partnerships with local governments, businesses, NGOs, and indigenous communities, universities contribute to sustainable development at regional and global levels. Service learning, community-based research, and sustainability-focused extension programs empower students and faculty to apply their knowledge in real-world settings, addressing pressing societal needs while building collaborative relationships. The pursuit of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has further strengthened the alignment between higher education and global sustainability objectives. Many universities have publicly committed to advancing the SDGs, integrating them into strategic plans, curriculum development, and research agendas. Globally, there has been an increasing recognition of the need for systemic change in higher education to fully realize its potential for sustainability. This shift is marked by the emergence of sustainability-focused networks and consortia such as the Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability (GUPES), the International Sustainable Campus Network (ISCN), and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE).

These platforms facilitate the exchange of best practices, joint research, and policy advocacy, enhancing the collective impact of institutions worldwide. Additionally, declarations such as the Talloires Declaration and the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) have articulated shared commitments to embedding sustainability

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